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KANSAS CITY, Mo., Sept. 18--Following is the text of a speech prepared for delivery by Vice President Walter F. Mondale at the KANSAS CITY STAR's Centennial Luncheon at the Radisson Muehlebach Hotel here.

Today we celebrate not just the founding of a remarkable newspaper. We celebrate the values of a great people.

One hundred years ago, when William Rockhill Nelson arrived in Kansas City and set up his printing press, he found a cowboy town with streets of mud. He discovered a society that was wide open; a land that was raw and wild; a people restless and impatient.

William Nelson set out to tame this city, and over the years he succeeded. He built your beautiful parks and broad boulevards. He called for street lights and paved thoroughfares. He struck at monopoly in business and corruption in government.

But even as the citizens of Kansas City rounded the rough edges of frontier life, they preserved and strengthened the heartland values of America. They took the independent spirit of the settlers, and built with it one of the most vigorous, most probing, most respected newspapers in the country. They took the faith of Samuel Clemens and forever committed this city to civil rights for all. They stayed true to the honest, stubborn and proud habits of their forebears -- and gave America one of our most decent and courageous Presidents ever, Harry Truman.

One of your Congressmen put it this way nearly a century ago: "Frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me."

Before a citizen here trusts his government, government has to earn that trust. Before he believes anything you tell him, you must show him why it is so.

That proud skepticism describes the Missouri character. It is priceless. It is why people here have insisted on their right to a newspaper as open and informative and free as the Kansas City Star.

William Nelson wanted to build the best paper in the world. It should cost so little that everyone could afford to buy it. It should probe so well that government would fear its wrath. It should be so committed to good writing that William Allen White and Ernest Hemingway could learn the art of their craft in these newsrooms. And they did.

Nelson worked at getting his newspaper out every day as if his life depended on it. He presided over the lay-out. He chose the illustrations. He leaned against the type-cases and watched as the pages were put together. He controlled every single thing about his paper except one -- the liberty of his newsmen and women.

As William Allen White said:

Every man on the paper -- in the advertising department, the circulation department, the news department, the editorial room -- was convinced in his own absolute freedom, the right to express himself unhampered, except by the truth as he saw it.